

Outspoken war critic thinks U.S. 'lucked out'

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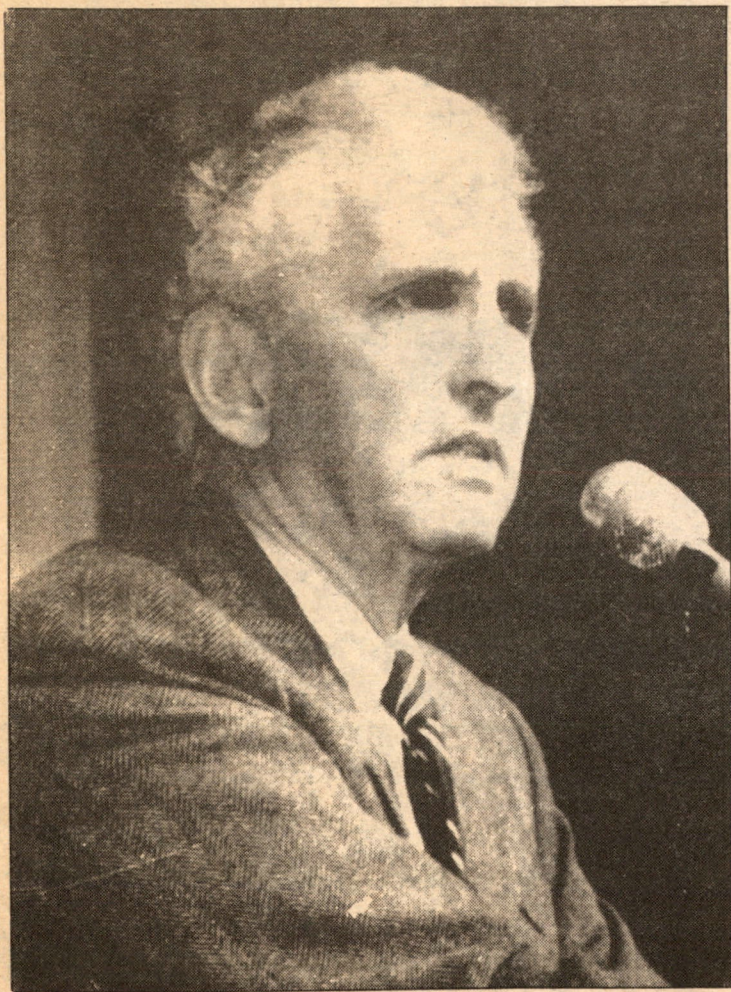


PHOTO BY BRUCE SHIELDS

Daniel Ellsberg, who stole the Pentagon Papers, said he was shocked at the nation's changed opinions once the Persian Gulf war started.

"I am not going to duck or hide my head," outspoken war critic Daniel Ellsberg said to an overflowing but attentive crowd at the University Union on Thursday.

Ellsberg, the former Department of Defense consultant who stole the Pentagon Papers and later became an opponent of the Vietnam War, continued his anti-war activities during the recent crisis in the Persian Gulf.

Ellsberg said he did everything possible to avert the war including lobbying, demonstrating, writing and conducting teach-ins.

"We had a situation where two men — Bush and Hussein — each came to feel that war served his purpose, and they were willing to risk lives rather than appear weak."

The night the war started, Ellsberg was arrested. "I preferred to be in jail."

Ellsberg said he was shocked by the apathy before the war and how quickly people changed their opinions once the war started. "Had I known it would go as well as it did, I still would have opposed it," he said, citing the unknown number of Iraqi civilian casualties.

"I don't think that we should conclude that there was no risk. I think they just lucked out."

Citing inside sources, Ellsberg said the Pentagon was seriously worried that Israel would respond with a nuclear strike if there had been more casualties on the first Scud attack.

Ellsberg is also worried about the nationalistic feeling sweeping the country. "I don't think we should base our pride on the performance of the military. It's a dangerous thing to do.

"It only encourages trust in the military who want to do it again and it encourages arms sales."

The peace activist also criti-

cized President Bush for proclaiming that the Vietnam syndrome was over. Ellsberg said he defines syndrome as a disease, a malaise that led to reflection across the country.

"The syndrome resulted in a wide range of people questioning the war."

Ellsberg also pointed out that there is no comparison between the number of anti-war protesters of the '60s and the number of protesters of the Gulf crisis.

"There were no protests at a comparable time in the Vietnam war. This was a pre-war movement."

He also responded to critics who accused protesters of being unpatriotic.

Ellsberg said that war protesters supported the troops, not the President's policy.

"War is now treated like a game where you root for the home team — if you don't, your loyalty is questioned."